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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000428

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TAGS: MARR NATO PREL AF NL
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS REDUCTION IN SUPPORT TO ISAF

REF: THE HAGUE 01383

Classified By: Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Under instructions Dutch Charge Van Der Werff and Col Tack (Dutch MilRep,s Office) met with Ambassador Nuland on 25 July to foreshadow a GONL decision to reduce by approximately one third their force presence in Uruzgan in ¶2008. While no final decisions have been made, Van Der Werff made it clear that the GONL expects to eventually transition the military lead in Uruzgan to another (as yet unidentified) nation in 2010. Dutch requested that when the decision becomes public knowledge the USG adopt a tone of mild disappointment, which will help the Government to sell the package at home. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On 26 July 2007, Van Der Werff will inform the NATO SYG, SACEUR, and principal partners in Regional Command South (AUS, CAN, GBR) of Dutch intention to reduce force contributions in support of ISAF operations. Between August 2008 and August 2010 the Netherlands will provide an &adapted form of support⁸ to ISAF in the Uruzgan Province. The Netherlands plans to maintain the lead in the Uruzgan Province from 2008 to 2010, but thereafter intends to become &a junior partner⁸ in the Province. The Netherlands Government would like to place its emphasis on reconstruction vice combat operations and force protection. According to Van Der Werff, troop reduction is a national political discussion in The Netherlands.

¶3. (C) Van Der Werff provided a possible scenario of Dutch capabilities in Uruzgan post August 2008: Command of RC-S on a rotational basis (plus agreed staff billets); Command of TF Uruzgan (including staff); a PRT with 3 mission teams (command and staff); 2 Observer Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs); a Battle Group (minus) (2 to 3 Companies, command and staff, plus combat and combat support); Intelligence, Surveillance, Targeting and Acquisition Radar (ISTAR) Element; Armored Engineer Company; Logistic Support Element; 4xF-16; 4xAH-64; and agreed billets in ISAF and Kandahar Airfield staffs. The following will be required contributions by Allies or partners: Base protection at Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod; 2 OMLTs; Role 2 medical facility at Tarin Kowt; 1 PRT mission team (including force protection); 1 Battle Group Company (preferably by mission team supplier); 2xF-16; and additional combat and transport rotary wing assets.

¶4. (C) In discussion, Van Der Werff and Ambassador Nuland assessed this to be an approximate one third reduction in Dutch support. Van Der Werff indicated that The Netherlands was actively seeking partners to mitigate these proposed

force reductions and was asking for assistance from the NATO SYG and SACEUR to aid in this effort. AMB Nuland recommended that if possible, NL should maintain its OMLTs and seek assistance from NOR, SWE, and FRA to fill other gaps, since OMLT reduction, in particular, will be seen as unhelpful to overall strategy.

¶5. (C) According to Van Der Werff, these reductions will be presented to the Netherlands, populace as significant. As such, he requested USG support in expressing the &requisite degree of disapproval once the proposals are made public in order to preclude further reductions by the NL Parliament. He stated, ~~8~~some moaning of the substantial reductions would be helpful.⁸ Van Der Werff stressed that while no final decisions have been taken, this demarche represented the working hypothesis of The Netherlands Government. A decision is expected prior to the end of August 2007.

¶6. (C) Ambassador Nuland advised Dutch to also coordinate with Canberra early in the process, since Dutch plans will have an impact on Australian presence in Uruzgan.

OLSON